

SPIRITUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A PARADIGM SHIFT

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A transition from exploitative economic development to sustainable development is impossible without respecting the essential linkages between sustainability and spirituality thereby emphasizing the inner development of mankind which would lead to a pattern of sustainable development to safeguard our environment. The purpose of this paper is to bring about public awareness, deepen understanding of the relationship between spirituality; sustainability & economic development and practical applications of ethical, religious as well as spiritual foundation towards SD. Keeping in view the present scenario of materialistic world, there is a vast need for strong ethical and spiritual framework for sustainable development. For making a sustainable and peaceful world through spirituality; emphasis must be on providing simple, accessible & qualitative moral as well as spiritual education to sustainable way of living, nurturing a spirit of universal sister and brotherhood, adoption of sustainable development goals (e.g. sustainable production and consumption), creation of spiritual – ethical institutional framework (whether religious or non-religious or both), development and implementation of new measures of GDP (inclusion of variables like social well-beings, ecological integrity, individual values & ethics, collective choice & behavior etc.), development of a system that protects the resilience of eco system at global; national and local level to prevent irreversible destruction, ombudspersons for future generations, implementation of precautionary measures etc. Unless and until, spiritual issues become central to the development process, the establishment of a sustainable global civilization will prove impossible.

Key Words: Sustainable Economic Development, Genuine Savings and Ecological Integrity.

INTRODUCTION

Economic growth is considered as a powerful catalyst in order to engage people in meaningful employment, create new businesses and to generate the public revenue necessary to finance sustained improvement in infrastructure as well as most important factor particularly towards poverty reduction in the developing world. Many economists like Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Harrod-Domar, Robert Solow, Nicholas Kaldor etc. have made an important contribution towards economic growth as a panacea to human progress. Economic growth indicates persistent and appreciable rise in the size of output i.e. real GDP of the economy (quantitative aspect) over a period of time, the minimum being two consecutive quarters by using all its scarce resources. It emphasizes the role of individuals as active generators of their own income, standard of living and lifting themselves out of poverty. In general, rapid economic growth in terms of real GDP growth was the standard benchmark to capture economic progress of a country up to 1950 as many countries like USA, UK, Germany, France, Italy etc. experienced the fruits of economic growth in terms of affluence. However, after the World War II, it was realized that economic growth had made a few countries richer and leaving other underdeveloped as they were earlier. Furthermore, even within a country, the distribution of income became uneven and the fruits of growth have bypassed the poorer section of the society.

thereby highlighting the role of redistribution of income towards underdeveloped areas as well as poor section of the society. It being so economists, policy makers, thinkers, statesman, planners etc. introduced a new concept to measure economic progress as 'Economic Development'.

Economic Development, a qualitative concept, is a larger set which encompasses Economic growth (size of Output) as well as Economic welfare. Economic growth means more output and economic development implies both more output and changes in the technical and institutional arrangements by which it is produced. Economic development means increase in the level of living of general masses thereby emphasizing the role of continuous increase in the level of real per capita income, covering a period not less than 25 to 30 years. It brings to light the pattern of allocation of scarce resources, the distribution of income among different groups and classes of community; in a sense, it combines the equity and growth aspect of development (Dhingra, I. C.: 2007). In the absence of any reliable indicator, a rise in the real per capita income is regarded as a standard measure of growth and development in all over the world. In order to reap the benefits of economic development, the five types of undesirable growth processes must be avoided viz., jobless growth, Ruthless growth, futureless growth, voiceless growth and rootless growth. We have a very sad worldwide commentary on these types of growth processes and most importantly it is the futureless growth which has given birth to the concept of sustainable development because the success of the industrial transformation like the more limited successes of hunting, gathering and agricultural transformation has led to ecological scarcities not only in terms of natural resource supply but also of the absorptive capacity of the natural sink (Mebratu, Desta: 1998). The global analysis of economic development process demonstrate that rapid economic growth has caused serious problems like increasing inequalities within and among the nations, no dramatic reduction in poverty especially in developing world, weakening of the ozone layer, global warming, exhaustion of natural resources, depletion of some species of animals and plants, dramatic loss to rural environment, water & air pollution etc., therefore sustainable development came as an effort to change the way of thinking towards the planet. The present paper also makes an attempt to bring about public awareness and deep understanding about sustainable economic development, spirituality, deepen understanding of the relationship amongst spirituality; sustainability & economic development and practical applications of ethical, religious as well as spiritual foundation towards SED.

Sustainable Development

Towards the journey of the evolution of the concept of sustainable development, we cannot ignore the foresightedness of various religious beliefs, theology, traditions, social structure, laws, morality, and spiritual teachings regarding the impact of environment & resources on the planet as well as living creature of Almighty God. All religion has also advocated the voice of nature to humanity. The demand for raw material and its impact on the environment have been a constant issue throughout human history. As early as the ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamia, Greek and Roman civilizations have talked about environmental problems such as deforestation, sanitization, loss of soil fertility etc. which we would termed today as sustainability problems. Plato (5th century B. C.), Strabbo & coumella (1st century B. C.) and Pliny the Elder (1st century A.D.) etc. discussed different types of environmental degradation resulting from human activities such as farming, logging and mining (Pisani, Jacobus A. Du; 2006). Prominent Economists like T. R. Malthus (An Essay on the principle of population; 1798), David Ricardo (Principle of political Economy; 1817), A. C. Pigou (Economics of welfare; 1929) etc. have warned that environment limits the growth of humanity from time to time. T. Veblen (Technician and Revolution; 1917) and A. C. Pigou (Economics of welfare; 1929) called for what we would today termed as sustainable development. These authors were not only aware of environmental degradation but also recommended what we would call sustainable

practices to maintain the everlasting youth of the earth.

After World WarII, people became aware of the terrible destruction caused by the scientific & technological progress more pronouncedly Industrial Revolution which has been started from England accompanied remarkable growth in production, consumption and wealth which has never been experienced before. People from different discipline e. g. economists, scientists, experts, policy makers, academician, non- governmental organizations starts thinking about rapid population growth, environmental degradation, energy shortages, pollution, resource depletion as well as their own survival as human. From 1960, hair-raising scientific information about the damage caused to the natural environment by human activities was published in books such as Rachel Carson's 'The silent spring'(For the first time, Earth's capacity to absorb chemicals was questioned in 1962), Paul Ehrlich's 'The population bomb'(1968), G. Myrdal's Cumulative Causation(1968), Edward Goldsmith's 'A blueprint for survival' (Goldsmith et al. 1972) and Fritz Schumacher's 'Small is beautiful'(1973). Ecological disasters received much media publicity. Films, TV programs and pop music popularized the idea of an imminent ecological crisis. Earth Day was celebrated for the first time in 1970. The Green Movement took off as the first environmental non-governmental organization, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth were established. Environmental groups became more outspoken, environmentalism became an ideology of some importance and green Political parties started making an impact (Pisani, Jacobus A. Du; 2006).

Environmental concern became more critical and deep-rooted when a think tank known as the Club of Rome came in to existence in 1968, who advocated zero growth. This group comprised of scientists, economists, national & international civil servants and industrialists from 53 countries. It has revealed the multifaceted problems that face all societies whether developed or developing. In 1971, this international association voiced an imperative anxiety by publishing 'The Limits to Growth'. Broadly speaking, it presents current economic development as being incompatible with the long-term protection of the planet.

However, the concept of sustainable development appears to have emerged by one of its earliest efforts in the global arena with the Stockholm Conference (Sweden) on human environment held in 1972. This founding conference was held in an atmosphere of conflict between the ecology and the economy. Thanks to the support of personalities such as Maurice Strong, Professor René Dubos, Barbara Ward and Ignacy Sachs etc. who have incorporated social equity and ecological caution into the economic development models for developed as well as developing countries. This would result in the creation of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and United Nations Development Programs (UNDP). In the decade of 1980, when the general public became aware of acid rain, the hole in the ozone layer, and the greenhouse effect etc., this gradually start awareness and took another step forward. Little by little, the media began to make these topics more accessible to the general public. In 1980, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in collaboration with World wide Fund (WWF) and United Nation Development Program (UNEP) published its world conservation strategy which aimed to advance sustainable development by identifying priority conservation issues and key policy options. This document is one of the original sources of the expression 'sustainable development'. It define sustainable development as:

"For development to be sustainable, it must take account of social and ecological factors, as well as economic ones; of the living and non-living resource base; and of the long-term as well as the short-term advantages and disadvantages of alternative action."

In 1983, the UN set up the world commission on Environment and Development (WCED)

under the chairmanship of Ms. Gro Harlem Brundtland, the first female Prime Minister of Norway from February, 1981 to October, 1981. (Brundtland also served as Prime Minister for two more terms i.e. from May, 1986 to October, 1989 and November, 1990 to October, 1996. She also served as the UN Director General of WHO from May 1998 to July 2003 and now is a Special Envoy on climate change for United Nation's Secretary General Office, Ban- Ki-Moon). The Commission comprised of representatives from both developed and developing countries, was created to address growing concern over the "accelerating deterioration of the human environment & natural resources and the consequences of that deterioration for economic and social development." Four years later, the WCED produced the landmark publication 'Our Common Future' (or the Brundtland report) in 1987 that provided a stark diagnosis of the state of the environment and economy. The report popularized the most commonly used definition of sustainable development. The most commonly cited and worldwide accepted definition of sustainable development which is given by World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED; 1987, p. 43) as "Sustainable development is a development process that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Therefore the constraint of "without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" highlighting for the requirement of some level of ecological (environmental), economic and social sustainability. Since then, the concept of sustainable development has been accepted all over the world.

- The critical objectives which follows from the concept of Sustainable development are:
- Growth revival along with a change in the quality of growth;
- Meet out crucial needs for food, energy, water, sanitation, jobs etc.;
- Ensuring a sustainable level of population, conserving and enhancing the resource base;
- Reorienting technology and managing risk;
- Merging environment and economics in decision making;
- Reorienting international economic relations;
- Last, but not the least, making development process more participatory.

Therefore, sustainable development can be defined as a process in which we use recyclable materials, resources and energy extremely efficient for the fulfilment of our present needs in an environmentally sound manner (Lele, Sharachchandra M.; 1991). This process can be facilitated by advancement in modern technology. Sustainable development possess all those characteristics which shows the links among community's economy, society and the environment and can be better understood by Gross national Happiness Index (GNHI), Human Development Index (HDI), Ecological Footprints (EF), the Happy Planet Index (HPI) and Global Sustainability Index (GSI). The definition of sustainable economic development (SED) can also be traced from the definition of sustainable development. In a simple way, economic development which is sustainable known as sustainable economic development. As we all know that Economics is the study of the allocation of scarce resources in alternative ways to meet out unlimited needs of the individual members in a given society so that there exists the prerequisite about new directions of economic policies if sustainable development is to be achieved. SED enhance equitable distribution of income and employment without degrading the natural environment or contributing to global climatic change. Therefore, in order to satisfy the concept of sustainable development, it is the need of the hour to study the best possible use of all available scarce resources in an efficient manner in order to

enhance the welfare of not just the present community but also of future generations to come on this planet. It is also pointed out that economic development is not sustainable without focusing on basic needs of the poor, consideration of environment and enabling stakeholder's participation. Sustainable economic development (SED) is the total development of the society which cannot effectively be analyzed separately as sustainability depends on the economic changes with social, cultural and ecological transformations. It is directly concerned with increasing standard of living of the poor at grass root level which can be quantitatively measured in terms of increased food, health care, sanitation, real income, educational services, water supply, emergency stock of food & cash etc. whereas indirectly concerned with economic growth at national level. Therefore, primary objective of SED is to reduce the absolute poverty of the world through providing lasting and secure livelihood that minimize resource depletion, environmental degradation, cultural disruption and social instability. (Barbier; 1987).

In June 1992, the first UN conference on environment and development (UNCED) was held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and formulated an Agenda 21 for environment & development in the 21st century. Again in 1993, UNCED instituted the commission on sustainable development to follow up the implementation of Agenda 21 and in 2002, ten years later after the Rio declaration, a follow up conference was organized in Johannesburg (South Africa) to know the global commitment on sustainable development. In 1999, the first Global Sustainability Index was launched to tracking leading corporate sustainability practices worldwide. In June 2012, a 20 year follow up conference was convened in Rio de Janeiro popularly known as Rio+ 20 where seven priority areas (decent jobs, energy, sustainable cities, food security & sustainable agriculture, water, ocean and disaster) were identified to reduce global poverty, advance social equity and to ensure environmental protection to a more crowded planet to get the future we want.

In general,

Sustainable Development = Economic Development + Social Development + Environmental Protection.

Broadly speaking, sustainable development has three basic pillars as scientific realities (population growth, deprivation, poverty, ecological balance, carrying capacity, environmental degradation etc.), consensus on ethical principles (spirituality) and consideration of long term interest (welfare of future generation) (Lele, Sharachchandra M.; 1991).

There are many initiatives in favor of sustainable development on the part of various governments. However, these initiatives are often scattered, sometimes not well known (in particular, there is little exchange between the public and private sectors), and not well promoted. These initiatives, which are rarely part of a long-term plan, are conducted by a wide variety of players: private and public-sector companies, associations, NGOs, territorial authorities, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, public bodies etc. All these initiatives sometimes constitute a local knowledge base that must be exploited, promoted and shared. The various ministries must increasingly provide the driving force to co-ordinate, promote, and encourage all stakeholders' involvement in sustainable development initiatives. In view of the size of the task, sustainable development requires coordinated action by all of the economic actors and the public authorities. However, one thing is also missing in every policy everywhere to achieve the goal of sustainable development i.e. the ethical aspect (spirituality). Spirituality and sustainability go hand in hand and former can help more in sustainable economic development (SED). Similarly, living in a sustainable manner helps in spiritual growth. Spirituality is essential for SD because the

questions of sustainability are ultimately rooted in morality & ethics and cannot be met by relying purely on economic incentives. A transition from exploitative economic development to SD is impossible without respecting the essential linkages of sustainability with spirituality.

Spirituality

There is no single and widely agreed definition of spirituality so far. Spirituality, in a traditional sense is a process of reformation to recover the original shape of a man i.e. the image of a God. To undertake this, the reformation is oriented at mold which represents the original shape e. g. Torah in Judaism, Christ in Christianity, Buddha in Buddhism, Muhammed in Islam, Shiva in Hinduism, and Guru Granth Sahib in Sikhs and so on. However, in modern times, the emphasis has shifted to subjective experience. It denotes a process of transformation. Spirituality may refer to any kind of meaningful activity, personal growth or blissful experience. It denotes a process of transformation but separate from organized religious institutions termed as 'spiritual but not religious'. Modern spirituality is a blend of humanistic psychology, mystical & esoteric traditions and Eastern religions (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirituality>).

In quantum physics, spirituality is called the quantum vacuum. The quantum vacuum is the source of all energies, and therefore the source of everything in the universe, including ourselves. It is conscious, it is aware, it 'thinks', and it constitutes all we desperately seek i.e. happiness, peace, wisdom, knowledge and intelligence. According to some views, this is what some religions call God. At the level of quantum vacuum (Holy Spirit), there is no individuality but Oneness. At this level, we are not individuals but integral parts of the Universal consciousness or the quantum vacuum. But, at the level of mind (and body), we perceive we are as individuals. That is why our sense of "I", self, self-centeredness, selfishness and greed for material wealth (Ulluwishewa, R. and Kumarsinghe, S.; 2014).

Spirituality is defined as a process of inner transformation which reduces our self-centeredness and greed for material wealth. It is an inward journey from our 'I' ness which is an illusion of oneness, which is a truth or from self-centeredness to selflessness. However, self-centeredness or greed for material wealth are not inherent human qualities but temporarily symptoms of our spiritual immaturity. As we grow spiritually, our sense of 'I' or individuality is replaced by oneness and self-centeredness & greed are replaced by selfless love and generosity. Spirituality is the state of mind which understands that the truth is beyond the barriers of worldliness, caste, creed, race or geographical boundaries. It is universal in nature and great spiritual thoughts are a cause of celebration for the whole mankind. It connects us to universal consciousness and gives a certain perspective in life (Rajvanshi, Anil. K; 2002).

In all major religion of the world, the respect for the nature is preached and the maxim of simple living and high thinking is ingrained. All great religion viz. Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism etc. represents different pathways towards simple living and high thinking i.e. inner transformation e. g. in Buddhism philosophy it is told that 'which do not desire for oneself, do not do to others', 'Do unto others what you would have them do unto you' (Christianity), 'Do nothing to your neighbor which you would not have your neighbor do to you' (Hinduism), 'Do to all men as you would they should do to you' (Islam), 'What is harmful to you do not to your fellow man' (Judaism) and so on (Ulluwishewa, R. and Kumarsinghe, S.; 2014).

However, it must be clear that spirituality is not a religion. Religion is merely a form of identity, a source of attachment which further strengthens self-centeredness, divide humanity & leads to conflicts, wars and loss of peace in the world but one thing is common in all the religion

that all religions respect nature, morality, ethics, universal sister & brotherhood, love and above all, the supremacy of God (except Buddhism which believes in karma). However, corruption, abuse and social ills have become part and parcel of most religious organizations. Many priests and churches preferred money and political powers over austerity and benevolence as the prophets had preached. Religious as well as political leaders used religion as a weapon for gaining political power and unfortunately the conflict between religious groups become a mean of remembering God. The crusades, religious riots and terrorism based on religious extremism serve as some examples. How could one believe in 'turn the other cheek when slapped on one' or abide by dharma when their leaders did not practice what they preached. The reality on the ground has often been so far what was suggested in the holy books. Many lost faith in religion and spirituality leading to confusion in morality and ethics. Spiritual awakening can also be obtained without having connection to the religion. (Ulluwishewa, Rohana; 2014). Religion usually have beliefs, rituals and guidelines but spirituality is more individual e.g. someone might not religious but have a strong sense of spirituality which mean that he may practice yoga, meditation, praying with a group or nurturing his spirit by spending time in nature.

The new age writers like Zohar (1990) as 'quantum self', Eijk (1998) as 'Transcendental Consciousness', Page & Berkow (1998) as 'the Self', Mcdaniel(2002) & Orr(2002) as 'Higher Forces', Tolle(2004) as 'the Being or the Unmanifest', Satya Sai Baba of India as 'constant integrated awareness' etc. are using these words for supernatural power i.e. God. Modern Spiritual writers are using the words like 'Universal Consciousness' or 'Higher Self' for divine power instead of using old words like God. Be that as it may be, God is a formless spirit or a divine energy which is omnipresent. God is thought to be within and outside, within all living creature and non-living things as well as the outside world. The entire universe or environment is filled with this divine energy. God is within us and the purpose of life as a human being is to realize this fact and to bring out the divine qualities hidden with us. Realizing the God within means realizing oneness with others, environment and the universe. Though we are truly one, the fact that we identify ourselves with the physical body which prevents us from recognizing this oneness. All spiritual practices, religious as well as non-religious aim at surpassing this false identity. As one realizes that one is not the physical body but the inner reality, one begins to see that 'myself' is also the 'self' of others and therefore all are one. With the realization of oneness with others, one becomes more sensitive to others' needs and feeling which at the end of the day makes one less self-centered, less selfish, less greedy and more loving, more compassionate and more empathetic. It is after this, one begins to live in harmony with others and the surrounding environment which sooner or later brings permanent peace and prosperity to the whole world. When viewed with this perspective, spirituality mingled with economic and social aspects will leads to sustainable development process (Ulluwishewa, Rohana; 2014).

There are religious as well as non-religious pathways for spiritual growth e.g. prayer, devotional melodic, recitation of divine name, meditation, charity etc. fall in the category of religious whereas self-transformation courses, workshops, conferences, Psycho spiritual therapy, spiritually inspired service activities, new-age scientific literature, spiritually oriented music and sports, past life regression therapy, meditation, selfless service to humanity etc. are some non-religious paths towards spiritual growth. With the help of Table No. 1, we can also distinguish between worldly happiness and spiritual happiness.

Table 1 :Difference between Worldly Happiness (Pleasure) and Spiritual Happiness (Bliss)

Worldly Happiness (Pleasure)	Spiritual happiness (Bliss)
Pleasure takes place when human sense organs come into contact with the things he likes more.	Bliss is practiced when human beings are in harmony with their inner realities i.e. universal consciousness.
Pleasure ends when the link with pleasure object is broken. Hence it is transient.	Bliss is long lasting as it prevails as long as someone remain in congruence with his inner reality.
Material wealth is required for pleasure which tend to believe that a wealthy person is happier.	Bliss is independent of material wealth.
Pleasure is person-specific, time specific and Place-specific. The same thing may give pleasure to one and pain to another, pleasure at a time and pain at another time, pleasure at one place and pain at another place.	Bliss is universal. It can be experienced by being one with the inner reality, regardless of person, time and place.
Pleasure can be gained at the expense of somebody else's pleasure.	Bliss cannot be gained at the expense of another's bliss but by sacrificing for the well-being of others.
Pleasure seeking makes us self-centered and greedy for material wealth.	If we seek bliss instead of pleasure, it makes us less self-centered, less greedy and more loving.

Source: Ulluwishewa, R.and Kumarsinghe, S.; 2014.

Linkages between Spirituality and Sustainable Development

The present development strategies whether economic or sustainable are guided by economic as well as social incentives and lacks ethical (spiritual) aspects resulting into aggravating poverty, inequality, over- exploitation of natural resources, environmental unsustainability and after all unhappiness. The development which is guided by only economic incentives cannot be sustainable because there is no economic incentive in the present global world to do anything for the sole benefits of the society in general and for the welfare of future generation in particular. However, there is no denying the fact that economic investments are of paramount importance to protect, renew and regenerate human & natural resources essential for sustainable development but unfortunately, it is not made in sufficient amount necessary for sustainable development. The present global economic scenario of depression also pointing out towards unsustainable nature of the current development process. Moreover, these economic incentives have filled human beings with greed, hatred, anger, envy, arrogance, jealousy, self-centeredness and malice. As long as human beings remain self-centered and greedy for material wealth and power with above stated qualities, conventional development models will fail to bring changes in the well- being of the world. Further, economic values are individual (related only to individuals), impersonal (if something can't be bought, sold or traded with other person, it has no economic value) and instrumental (a mean to a further end, utility or satisfaction).

Similarly, social values (relational, personal and instrumental) also play an important role in sustainable development process as social relationships help in shaping local ethical values. Ethical

values may be learned from parents, teachers, community, peers and society and so on. However, social values provide no incentives to ensure justice for people with whom we have no personal relationships. Moreover, the ethical values that have evolved out of past social relationships are not adequate to address the present ecological, social or economic challenges of the world as these ethical values are dominated by economic materialism. However, past social values are necessary but not sufficient for sustainable development. The only values sufficient to ensure equity and justice within and among generations are ethical values. The values needed to create a new ethics of sustainability must be accessed directly through prayers, meditations, repetition, singing, charity, generosity, reading of spiritual literature, spiritually oriented games; music & sports, participating in spiritual or transformation workshops, talks & conferences etc.

Spiritual or ethical values are very important for sustainable development because questions of sustainability are ultimately rooted in morality and ethics. Everything of economic value ultimately came from earth's eco-system and reached to individual through society in modern world. Therefore, we depends upon relationships with other people to get the things and sustainability finally depends on ecological, social and economic integrity, the three familiar pillars or cornerstones of sustainable development. Spirituality is the foundation upon which these cornerstones must be laid. (Ulluwishewa, R. and Kumarsinghe, S.; 2014).

Ethical values are non-instrumental and impersonal because the action which is solely based on ethics is not a mean of acquiring some further ends. Purely ethical relationships produce nothing of economic value to exchange or to be traded with anything else. What is ethically right for one person is also right for another person. Ethical or spiritual values are also bears the quality of communal as what is right for one person is also right for all person of both present and future generations i.e. for all people in common. Therefore sustainable development ultimately depends upon ethical values. Moral aspects of an individual in life and the quality of an individual relationships with other human being & the environment are very important for making SD a success (Ikerd, John; 2008). The development based on the values of spirituality like empathy (the capacity to sense others' feelings), loving kindness (the wish of others' happiness), compassion (the wish to alleviate others' suffering), generosity (the willingness to share one's wealth with others to reduce their suffering), forgiveness, tolerance, understanding & wisdom, peace, creativity, non-greediness, sharing, co-operation, practicing ceiling of desires, non-violence, selfless service to humanity etc. will undoubtedly alleviate poverty & inequality which is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. It has also the potential to deliver long term happiness or contentment thereby peace and prosperity to all (Ulluwishewa, R. and Kumarsinghe, S.; 2014).

Spirituality helps us in keeping our greed for material well-being and resources in check and SD can only take place when we use the resources for our needs and not for our greed as Mahatma Gandhi once said. As we evolve spiritually, we became more tuned to things around us and that include nature. We start enjoying the beauty of nature, appreciating it and this helps us in preserving it as much as possible and hence is a step towards sustainable living. As a person progresses on the path of spirituality, his or her priorities in life also change. The focus of life shifts towards getting personal happiness through mental peace and less on material needs and desires. A sense of 'Vairagya' or detachment comes and hence a person becomes less interested in materialistic life. This is the beginning of sustainable development since his or her needs are reduced. Recent examples of Mahatma Gandhi and Einstein have shown that with very few needs and living very simply, they were able to produce the highest quality of thought. This has also been the tradition of our great saints. Spirituality also helps us to live in harmony with each other and this enables everybody to work together for common good. (Rajvanshi, Anil. K; 2002).

The Baha'i International Community also states that *"No matter how far the material world advances, it cannot establish the happiness of mankind. Only when material and spiritual civilization are linked and coordinated, happiness will be assured"*. For the vast majority of the world's people, the idea that human nature is fundamentally spiritual is an undisputable truth. Indeed, this perception of reality is the defining cultural experience for most of the world's people and is inseparable from how they perceive themselves and the world around them. It is, therefore, only by bringing a focus on the spiritual dimension of human reality, we should develop those programs and policies which can truly reflect the experiences, conditions and aspirations of the planet's inhabitants and stimulate their heartfelt support and active participation(<https://www.bic.org/.../sustainable-development-spiritual-dimension>).

With the help of table 2, we can distinguish between the present model of development and spiritually based development.

Table 2 : Spirituality Based-Development: A New Paradigm shift

Conventional Development	Spirituality Based-Development
Development is a worldly activity.	Development is a spiritual activity.
It promotes our selfishness and greed.	It promotes our spiritual values such as love and generosity.
It promotes exploitation and accumulation of wealth. Hence, it leads to inequality.	It promotes sharing of material wealth. Therefore it leads to equity.
It gives higher priority to material wealth than to relationships.	It gives higher priority to relationships than to material wealth.
Life is barren of love and hence fruitless	Life is full of love and accomplishing;
People are discontented and want to seek happiness in sensual pleasures.	People are contented and are not interested in seeking happiness in sensual pleasures.
People consume more than they actually need. They suffer from poor health conditions caused by over-consumption (rich) and under-consumption (poor).	Therefore, people consume only to meet their basic survival needs. They are healthy
It causes a heavy stress on the natural environment. Hence development is unsustainable.	Development does not cause too much stress on natural environment. Hence, it is sustainable.

Source: [devnet.org.nz/.../DevNet%20Slides-Ulluwishewa_Kumarasinghe-\(27-11-](https://devnet.org.nz/.../DevNet%20Slides-Ulluwishewa_Kumarasinghe-(27-11-)

SPIRITUAL MEASURES TO OBTAIN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We dream of a world without poverty, a world that is equitable, a world that respects the dignity of all living beings and the sacredness of the natural world, a world where we recognize the mutual care and deep regard required for us to act in ways that will genuinely reduce poverty and protect Earth's natural resources, a world that is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, where the challenges such as climate change, loss of biodiversity and social inequity have been successfully addressed. This is an achievable dream, but we must collectively pave a new way. The current development pathway is deeply flawed and will not realize our dream. Achieving the environmental, economic, and social goals associated with sustainability requires worldwide collaboration of ethical and spiritual values. (sustainabilitytreaties.org/draft-treaties/ethical-and-spiritual-values). Keeping in view the present scenario of materialistic world, there is a vast need for strong ethical and spiritual framework for sustainable development. For making a sustainable and peaceful world through spirituality; emphasis must be on:

- Provide simple; accessible & qualitative moral as well as spiritual education to children at an early age through schools, books, mass media, school curricula etc. In this process, the role of woman needs to be brought to the mainstream especially in third world countries as they constitute half of the human race and can tremendously influence the brain of children being a mother. The introduction of the seeds of ethical & spiritual values in the minds of children can flower and blossom later in their lives leading to sustainable way of living. Similarly, steps must be undertaken to educate people at every level (whether college, university, working class or general public) to understand the critical changes that needs to be done in our economic, social, environmental and government structure to work effectively in the process of sustainable development to create a prosperous future for all and the generations yet to born. Creation of spiritual - ethical institutional framework(whether religious or non- religious or both), its global sharing and effective implementation at global, national as well as local level can make a success to the development process in a sustainable manner in the right direction. It will also be helpful to create an environment of nurturing a spirit of universal sister and brotherhood.
- There is a need for the development and implementation of new measures of GDP (inclusion of variables like social well-beings, ecological integrity, individual values & ethics, genuine savings, collective choice & behavior etc.) at global level which must be adopted by each and every country for the measurement of growth and development. We have to develop a system that protects the resilience of eco system to prevent irreversible destruction at global; national and local level. Adoption of sustainable development goals (e.g. sustainable production and consumption), ombudspersons for future generations, implementation of precautionary measures etc. are some other measures in this direction. There is also a need for worldwide cooperation on development of sustainable and ecologically sound knowledge. There are about 702 million people who live below the extreme poverty line (World Bank in October, 2015 defines international poverty line as \$1.90 per day) especially in developing countries need to be brought into the mainstream of development process. If they remain in a state of poverty, the destruction of nature will continue to take place, since developing countries are also following the same nature destroying model of developed countries half a century ago. Equitable international cooperation in technology and resource transfer will allow the developing countries to leapfrog into modern age and help in sustainable development. The ensuring economic and social development will also help to reduce the social conflict in the world.
- Last, but not the least, a universal spiritual mass movement encompassing of people from every sphere must be carried out towards sustainable development process. Rapidly progressive environmental alterations like global warming, ozone depletion, soil degradation, forest depletion, species extinction etc. are threatening the delicate ecological balance of the ecosphere in a speedy way. Hence, it is the responsibility of every stakeholder in this globe to tackle the issues related to sustainability in an accountable and responsible manner to arouse awareness in the society. The spiritual transformation of individuals i.e. change of mindset, exploration of human centered development, realization of earth's carrying capacity, a vision of wholeness in our relationship with nature & humanity, voluntary implementation of spiritual & ethical value etc. will undoubtedly make spiritual movement a success. Incorporation of spirituality into development process is necessary to alleviate poverty & economic inequality, to achieve environmental sustainability and in resultant deliver happiness to all human being. Unless and until, spiritual issues become central to the development process, the establishment of a sustainable global civilization will prove impossible.

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